

REMARKS

I. Status of Claims

Claims 1-15 are pending in the present application.

Claim 3 is rewritten in independent form.

Claim 4 is amended to depend from claim 3, and to recite that the NO_x removal catalyst is immersed in regeneration water until bubbling stops and, subsequently, removed from the regeneration water, with support, for example, at page 8, lines 4-8 of the specification.

Claims 9, 10 and 12 are rewritten in independent form, incorporating the subject matter of claim 1, and to recite that the method for regenerating an NO_x removal catalyst includes the step of installing the NO_x removal catalyst that is regenerated.

No new matter is added. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request entry and consideration of the Amendment.

II. Response to Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 3, 4 and 9-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. Claims 3 and 4 were rejected based on the limitation that the catalyst removed from the regeneration water is washed with water. The Examiner asserted that washing with water is an additional step that is not allowed in view of the “consisting of” language of claim 1. Additionally, claims 9-15 were rejected because the installation process described therein occurs after the regeneration process, and therefore these claims do not further limit the claims from which they depend. The Examiner also considered that claims 9-15 add additional steps to the method of claim 1, which is not allowed based on the “consisting of” language of claim 1.

Claims 3, 4 and 9-15, as amended, comply with the requirements of § 112, second paragraph, at least for the following reasons.

Claim 3 is rewritten in independent form.

Claim 4 is amended to depend from claim 3, and to recite that the NO_x removal catalyst is immersed in regeneration water until bubbling stops and, subsequently, removed from the regeneration water.

Claims 9, 10 and 12 are amended to be written in independent form, incorporating the subject matter of claim 1, and to recite that the method for regenerating an NO_x removal catalyst includes the step of installing the NO_x removal catalyst that is regenerated.

In view of the above, claims 3, 4, 9, 10 and 12 comply with the requirements of § 112, second paragraph. Claims 11 and 13-15 also comply with the requirements of § 112, second paragraph, at least by virtue of their dependence from claims 9, 10 and 12.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 112, second paragraph rejection of claims 3, 4 and 9-15.

III. Response to Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,232,254); and, claims 12-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider, and further in view of Sueyoshi et al. (JP 53-125964).

Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claims 1, 3, 9, 10 and 12 include “consisting of” transitional language, thereby limiting the scope of the claims to the method steps recited therein.

In comparison, Schneider discloses a method of regenerating a catalyst used for nitrous oxide removal from stack gases, such that the method can be employed without removing the catalyst from the apparatus. The surface layer of the deactivated or partially deactivated catalyst

is scrubbed using demineralized water. At column 3, lines 31-36, Schneider further describes that the catalytic devices are first mechanically cleaned by vacuuming or blowing the deposits out of the device. The catalytic device of Schneider appears to have a honeycomb structure, and Schneider also discloses that the catalytic device is dried using stack gas or hot air. Since Schneider teaches a vacuuming step that is not present in the regeneration method of claim 1, the invention of Schneider is outside the scope of the present claims.

In view of the above, claims 1, 3, 9, 10 and 12 are patentable over Schneider. Claims 2, 4-8 and 11 are also patentable, at least by virtue of their dependence from claims 1 and 9. Claims 13-15 are also patentable, at least by virtue of their dependence from claims 9 and 10 and because Sueyoshi does not cure the above discussed deficiency in Schneider.

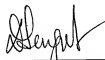
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection of claims 1-15.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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